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ABSTRACT

Since 1975, more than 400 teachers have successfully completed workshops at the University of Lethbridge (Canada) on the application of clinical supervision methods in the supervision of student teachers. Over 100 of these teachers, all of whom had supervised at least 3 student teachers, responded to a questionnaire requesting information on the effectiveness of the workshop material. The teachers overwhelmingly reported that the workshop was "valuable" or "extremely valuable." Their tendency to reply positively was unaffected by either the number of students they had supervised or the number of years that had passed since they had taken the workshop. The teachers tended to use the complete supervisory cycle taught in the workshop more frequently when dealing with advanced students, and very few had never used it. The teachers were more eager to work with student teachers after the workshop than before it, felt that their supervisory skills had improved from the "adequate to poor" range to the "better than adequate to excellent" range, and felt much more comfortable as supervisors following the workshop. A copy of the questionnaire is appended. (PGD)

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TEACHER ASSOCIATE PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CLINICAL SUPERVISION WORKSHOP

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The University of Lethbridge

Paper presented at CSSE, Guelph, Ontario

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TEACHER ASSOCIATE PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CLINICAL SUPERVISION WORKSHOP

by Jim Twa

This second study on the clinical supervision workshops addresses the issue of teacher associate preparation from the point of view of the teacher associates who have been trained in the use of the clinical supervision cycle. The theory underlying the clinical supervision concept has been discussed by Jon Thorlacius.

A substantial portion of the supervision of practicum students in The University of Lethbridge teacher education program is delegated to teacher associates (TAs). Prior to about 1975, with the exception of the few teachers who had taken the clinical supervision course, most of the teacher associates had not been specifically prepared for the task of supervising students. Accordingly, the Faculty of Education introduced a Clinical Supervision Workshop for teacher associates in the spring semester, 1975. Although there have been several substantial changes in the content, the workshop has been offered on a continuing basis through to the present time with the same basic objectives--to prepare teacher associates to supervise practicum students

using the clinical supervision approach.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purposes of this study were 1) to examine TAs' perceptions of the value of the clinical supervision workshop in their supervision of practicum students, and 2) to assess TAs' opinions of the various components of the workshop.

METHODOLOGY

Honouring the position that one of the best ways to find out how a group feels about anything is to ask the members of that group, TAs were asked to complete a questionnaire regarding the workshop (see Appendix A). The first question in the instrument dealt with the TAs' experience in supervising practicum students both before and after completing the workshop. It was thought that this information would give perspective to the information provided by the respondents and that perhaps TAs' assessment of the usefulness of the workshop might be related to their experience in supervising practicum students.

The next two questions (2 and 3) attempted to determine which version of the workshop had been completed by the respondent. The investigators had reasoned that the

inclusion of STACS[5] (Thorlacius, 1978) as a system to enable the TAs to analyse their own supervisor conferences might favourably influence their perceptions of the value of the various parts of the workshop and of the workshop as a whole (question 5). Question 4 was related to STACS as well, asking the degree to which TAs had carried their knowledge of the STACS system through to the application state. This was done with a view to verifying one of the assumptions on which the workshop was designed-- that for a skill to be useful participants must have the opportunity to practice that skill and receive feedback on their performance.

The purpose of question 6 was to determine the practicability of using the complete clinical supervision cycle with students in each of of the three levels of practica at The University of Lethbridge. Some of the personnel involved with the program have argued that the complete clinical supervision cycle is too cumbersome and time-consuming to use in the earlier practica. Questions 7 through 12 asked TAs to assess the workshop in terms of some of its broad general objectives.

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[5] STACS is an acronym for Supervisor-Teacher Analogous Categories System

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In summary, the questionnaire was designed to sample TAs' perceptions of the value of the workshop. The workshop purported to offer assistance to TAs in supervising practicum students and it seemed necessary and important to determine whether they found it to be helpful.

The Sample

Through a search of the registration records for the workshop it was determined that more than 400 teachers had successfully completed the workshop since 1975. By matching the names of the TAs who had supervised at least three practicum students including one after or concurrent with enrolment in the workshop it was possible to identify 163 for whom current addresses were available. Those 163 TAs became the sample for the study.

Procedures

Individually addressed envelopes containing a covering letter, the questionnaire, and an addressed stamped envelope for returning the completed questionnaire were delivered to the local and nearby rural schools for distribution through the school office. Where distances prevented this delivery method the envelopes were sent through the mail. One week later a follow-up postcard was mailed to each of the possible respondents.

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Limitations of the Study

A major limitation of this study was that it was designed by the same persons who designed the clinical supervision workshop. It is possible that this situation might have promoted a certain amount of bias in interpreting the findings. Also the study makes no attempt to assess the appropriateness of the workshop objectives. Although there has been continuous and extensive communication with classroom teachers and supervisors at all levels in the geographic region where The University of Lethbridge practicum students are placed, the argument might be made that the workshop did not address the "proper" or "correct" objectives. One of the assumptions upon which this study was based was that the "needs of the TAs" have been accurately assessed.

A second limitation is that the questionnaire assessed teachers' perceptions only. For example, in questions which asked how often TAs applied the clinical supervision cycle there was no way of answering whether the responses accurately reflected the reality of the situation.

RESULTS

Of the 163 questionnaires distributed to TAs, six were returned by the post office with notations such as "moved,

address unknown" and therefore the possible number of returns was reduced to 157. A total of 107 (68% of the 157) completed questionnaires were received by the investigators. A breakdown of the number of TAs by experience in supervising at the three levels of practica is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Number of TAs Who Supervised Practicum Students at Each Practicum Level Before and After the Workshop

	Ed. 2500 Orientation to Teaching		Ed. 3500 Professional Semester I		Ed. 3600 Professional Semester II	
	Before Work-shop	After Work-shop	Before Work-shop	After Work-shop	Before Work-shop	After Work-shop
1 - 3 students	38	37	39	53	30	67
4 - 6 students	10	10	12	14	12	19
7 - 9 students	5	3	2	6	7	4
10 or more	3	2	3	0	4	2

It should be noted that the categories are not mutually exclusive; that is, TAs often supervised students at more than one practicum level and therefore totals in rows or columns are meaningless.

To determine whether there was a possible relationship between the amount of TAs' experience in supervising practicum students at the three levels and their responses to the eight parts of question 5 which asked them to rate the value of the workshop to them in supervising practicum students, a chi-square analysis was conducted. Examination of the 48 resulting calculations revealed that only two reached the .05 level of significance. Because of the large number of calculations (48) it was concluded that these quite possibly were chance occurrences and therefore should not be used as evidence to substantiate a claim that any real significance could be attached to the relationship between TAs' assessments of the value of the workshop and the amount of their experience in supervising practicum students (number of students supervised).

A breakdown of the numbers of TAs by recency of the workshop attendance (question 2) is shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Number of TAs Who Attended Workshop
During Each Time Period

Number of TAs	%	When Workshop Taken
27	25.2	5 or more years ago
45	42.1	3 - 4 years ago
35	32.7	0 - 1 years ago
107	100.	

This information was obtained to examine whether TAs' perceptions of the value of the workshop were related to when they took the workshop or to the version of the workshop they experienced. As mentioned previously the content of the workshop was altered substantially several times. The major changes coincided with the time intervals used in this question. Consequently chi-square analyses of the responses of the three groups to the eight parts of question 5 were conducted. The results indicated that the responses of the three groups to the eight sub-categories of question 5 were not significantly different. (None of the calculations reached the .05 level of significance chosen for this study.)

Responses to question 3, "Was Supervisor-Teacher Analagous Categories System (STACS) included in the workshop?" were also submitted to non-parametric analyses in relation to this assessment of the value of the workshop as a whole. There was no significant difference between the responses of those who had used STACS and those who had not. Analysis of the responses to questions 4 and 5 also indicated that there was no significant difference in TAs' assessments of the value of STACS and the workshop as a whole between those who valued highly the analysis of their supervisor conferences and those who did not.

The TAs' responses to the eight subsections of question 5 were analyzed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov one-sample test to determine whether they were different from a uniform or random distribution; that is, to determine whether TAs' responses were similar to those of a group who responded to the questions in a random manner. Tables 3 through 10 show the distribution of TAs' responses and the results of the K-S Goodness of Fit Test to the eight subsections of question 5 which asked them to assess the value of the workshop as a whole and its various components.

TABLE 3

TAs' Perceptions of Value of
Interpersonal Skills Component

TA Response	Frequency	Percent of total
No value	2	1.9
Little value	1	0.9
Some value	10	9.4
Valuable	59	55.7
Extremely valuable	34	32.1
Total number of responses	106	100.0

K-S D = 6.459
p = 0.000

TABLE 4

TAs' Perceptions of Value of
Communication Skills Component

TA Response	Frequency	Percent of Total
No value	1	1.0
Little value		0.0
Some value	12	11.4
Valuable	53	50.5
Extremely valuable	39	37.1
Total number of responses	105	100.0

K-S D = 6.417
p = 0.000

TABLE 5

TAs' Perceptions of Value of Data Collection Skills

TA Response	Frequency	Percent of Total
No value	2	1.9
Little value	1	1.0
Some value	22	21.0
Valuable	38	36.2
Extremely valuable	42	40.0
Total number of responses	105	100.0*

K-S D = 5.245
p = 0.000

*Percents in Tables 5, 7 8 and 10 do not total 100 because of rounding errors

TABLE 6

TAs' Perceptions of Value of Flanders Interaction Analysis

TA Response	Frequency	Percent of Total
No value	4	3.8
Little value	8	7.6
Some value	25	23.8
Valuable	44	41.9
Extremely valuable	24	22.9
Total number of responses	105	100.0

K-S D = 4.074
p = 0.000

TABLE 7

TAs' Perceptions of Value of Data Analysis Techniques

TA Response	Frequency	Percent of Total
No value	1	1.0
Little value	11	10.5
Some value	32	30.5
Valuable	46	43.8
Extremely valuable	15	14.3
Total number of responses	105	100.1

K-S D = 3.952
p = 0.000

TABLE 8

TAs' Perceptions of Value of Analysing Own Supervisor Conference

TA response	Frequency	Percent of Total
No value	1	1.0
Little value	4	4.0
Some value	21	20.8
Valuable	55	54.5
Extremely valuable	20	19.8
Total number of responses	101	100.1

K-S D = 4.950
p = 0.000

TABLE 9

TAs' Perceptions of Value of Clinical Supervision Cycle Approach

TA Response	Frequency	Percent of Total
No value	0	0.0
Little value	3	2.9
Some value	5	4.8
Valuable	53	50.5
Extremely valuable	44	41.9
Total number of responses	105	100.00

K-S D = 6.904
p = 0.000

TABLE 10

TAs' Perceptions of Value of Workshop as a Whole

TA Response	Frequency	Percent of Total
No value	1	0.9
Little value	1	0.9
Some value	5	4.7
Valuable	54	50.9
Extremely valuable	45	42.5
Total number of responses	106	99.9

K-S D = 7.042
p = 0.000

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As can be seen from the tables, TAs' responses indicated that they perceived the workshop as a whole and its component parts to be highly valuable to them in supervising practicum students. The K-S calculations show that their responses to all the subsections of question 5 varied significantly from a random distribution. Examination of that variation indicates that the responses are biased heavily toward the "valuable" and "extremely valuable" end of the scale. Most highly rated were the clinical supervision cycle approach and the workshop as a whole with well over 90% of the respondents rating each as valuable or extremely valuable.

Question 6 with its three subsections was designed to test the assumption that because the clinical supervision approach is a fairly sophisticated and time-consuming process, it would probably be seen as more applicable to P.S. II, the final, more intensive and longer practicum, than to Orientation to Teaching and P.S. I, the less intensive and shorter practica. Following from this line of reasoning was the additional assumption that the TAs would find it more practical to use the clinical supervision approach in P.S. I than in Orientation to Teaching. These assumptions were validated by the results of the Wilcoxon

Matched-Pairs Signed-ranks Test (see Table 11).

TABLE 11

Frequencies and Results of Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-ranks Test For Various Questions

Category	Range of Responses* 5	4	3	2	1	Wilcoxon N	T	p
Frequency of applic. of C-S Cycle: Orient to Tchg.	9	12	2	24	13	.52	-3.19	0.001
Frequency of applic. of C-S Cycle: Prof. Sem. I	8	23	20	14	6	67	-2.07	0.039
Frequency of applic. of C-S Cycle: Prof. Sem. II (Orient. with P.S. II)	12	43	29	8	2	59	-3.97	0.000
Eagerness to accept students - before	17	30	30	16	10	102	-6.44	0.000
- after	37	60	5	1	1			
Perception of supervisory skills - before	2	8	54	32	8	103	-8.04	0.000
- after	12	77	13	2	0			
Comfortable as a supervisor - before	8	24	34	28	9	101	-7.62	0.000
- after	33	65	5	0	0			

*In each instance 5 indicated the most positive response and 1 the most negative response.

Also shown in Table 11 are the results of asking TAs' perceptions of their status "before" and "after" taking the workshop based on three of the major objectives of the workshop. Questions 7 and 8 asked TAs to assess their eagerness to accept practicum students into their classrooms before and after they took the workshop. There was a remarkable shift toward the "eager" end of the scale in the "after workshop" responses. Questions 9 and 10 asked TAs for a similar "before" and "after" workshop comparison of their supervisory skills. Again the shift toward the positive end of the scale in the "after" responses is evident and the Wilcoxon test confirms that the shift is statistically significant.

Questions 11 and 12 asked TAs to indicate how comfortable they felt as supervisors before and after their participation in the workshop. As in the two previous comparisons it can be seen that there is a statistically significant shift toward the positive end of the scale in the "after workshop" responses.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The overwhelming conclusion of this study is that TAs perceived the supervision workshop to be very useful to them in supervising practicum students. This perception was not

affected by the amount of their experience in supervising students. TAs who had worked before and/or after the workshop with large numbers of students generally valued the workshop as much as those who had worked small numbers.

TAs' perceptions that the workshop was very valuable to them was not found to be related to whether they had taken the workshop recently or several years ago; nor was it found to be related to some of the major changes in content. It is possible that the instrument used (the questionnaire) was not sensitive enough to register reaction to the workshop format (almost all TAs tended to be very positive about whatever version of the workshop they experienced).

TAs who had taken the workshop when STACS was included did not value the workshop any differently from those who had taken the workshop before the inclusion of STACS. TAs who had used STACS to analyze at least one of their own supervisory conferences did not value STACS, or the workshop as a whole, differently from those who had studied STACS but had not applied it at least once. It had been hypothesized that using the system and getting feedback on their performance would tend to make TAs' perceptions of the workshop and STACS more favourable but this hypothesis was not verified. Again, it is possible that a result was masked because of the overall positive reaction and/or the

lack of sensitivity in the instrument.

As hypothesized, TAs tended to use the complete clinical supervision cycle more extensively with P.S. II than with P.S. I students and with P.S. I more than with Orientation to Teaching students. They did, however, use the cycle at least once each round with all levels of practicum students. Even at the Orientation to Teaching level where it was employed least, 43.8% of those who responded to the question employed the clinical supervision cycle, while 12.1% said they never used it. (The 43.9% who did not respond to the question for students at this level probably had not worked with Orientation to Teaching students.) At the P.S. II level where it was used more, only 1.9% of the TAs said they never used the complete cycle, a remarkably low figure when one considers that at the beginning of the workshops some of the TAs were outspokenly opposed to the method. It must be noted that there is a possibility that those who were most negative did not complete the questionnaire.

Finally, the evidence examined in this study supports the view that three of the major objectives of the workshop were achieved. As a result of the workshop TAs perceived that:

1. they were more eager to accept practicum students after the workshop than before they had taken it,

2. their supervisory skills improved from the "adequate to poor" range to the "better than adequate to excellent" range, and

3. they felt much more comfortable as supervisors after the workshop.

Insofar as these three objectives meet the needs of supervisors, the TAs perceived that the workshop had been very valuable to them in supervising practicum students. One would have to conclude that the workshop has met its objectives as perceived by those who designed it.

REFERENCES

Thorlacius, Jon, M. "The Supervisor-Teacher Analogous Categories System (STACS): A System for Analyzing Supervisor-Teacher Supervisory Conferences." Challenge on Educational Administration. Volume XVII. Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, (1978), 77-90.

APPENDIX A

Clinical Supervision
Workshop Questionnaire

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The University
Of Lethbridge

Dear Colleague:

Enclosed is a questionnaire regarding the workshop on Clinical Supervision and Analysis of Teaching which we have conducted to help prepare Teacher Associates for their role in working with student teachers.

The information is being gathered as part of the data for evaluation of the extended practicum. We would greatly appreciate your taking the time to respond to these questions. Anonymity will be protected and you are not asked to identify yourself in any way.

We would appreciate your returning the questionnaire, in the self-addressed envelope provided, by April 10.

Thank you for your assistance.

R. Whitehead
Ritchie Whitehead

Jim Tiwd

Jon Thorlacius

JMT:gc
Enc.

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TEACHER ASSOCIATE PERCEPTIONS OF THE
VALUE OF THE CLINICAL SUPERVISION WORKSHOP

The numbers associated with each question (e.g. 5.1) are for the convenience of computer operators only and should not influence your responses in any way.

1. How many practicum students have you worked with at each level:

	Before taking the workshop? (check one)		During or after taking the workshop? (check one)	
Ed. 2500 Orientation to Teaching	(5.1) ____	1-3	(6.1) ____	1-3
	(5.2) ____	4-6	(6.2) ____	4-6
	(5.3) ____	7-9	(6.3) ____	7-9
	(5.4) ____	10 or more	(6.4) ____	10 or more
Ed. 3500 Professional Semester I	(7.1) ____	1-3	(8.1) ____	1-3
	(7.2) ____	4-6	(8.2) ____	4-6
	(7.3) ____	7-9	(8.3) ____	7-9
	(7.4) ____	10 or more	(8.4) ____	10 or more
Ed. 3600 Professional Semester II	(9.1) ____	1-3	(10.1) ____	1-3
	(9.2) ____	4-6	(10.2) ____	4-6
	(9.3) ____	7-9	(10.3) ____	7-9
	(9.4) ____	10 or more	(10.4) ____	10 or more

2. When did you take the workshop? (Check one)

(11.1) _____ 5 or more years ago
(11.2) _____ 3-4 years ago
(11.3) _____ 0-2 years ago

3. Was Supervisor-Teacher Analogous Categories System (STACS) included in the materials you studied in your workshop?

(12.1) _____ Yes
(12.2) _____ No

4. If your answer to question 3 was "yes", did you use the Supervisor-Teacher Analogous Categories System to analyse at least one of your supervisory conferences?

(13.1) _____ Yes
(13.2) _____ No

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5. Please rate on the following five-point scale, these major components of the workshop according to their value to you in working with practicum students.

5	4	3	2	1
extremely valuable	valuable	somewhat valuable	of little value	of no value

(14.x) Interpersonal relations skills; for example, trust, self-disclosure, feedback, etc.

5 4 3 2 1

(15.x) Communication skills; for example, paraphrasing, behaviour description, perception checking, etc.

5 4 3 2 1

(16.x) Data collection skills; for example, tallying student and teacher behaviour such as "at task", number of questions directed to various students, etc.

5 4 3 2 1

(17.x) Skill in using "Flanders Interaction Analysis", particularly with regard to tallying student teacher behaviours.

5 4 3 2 1

(18.x) Data analysis techniques; for example, preparing data displays, drawing inferences from data collected, etc.

5 4 3 2 1

(19.x) Analysis of your own supervision conferences either informally or with the STACS system.

5 4 3 2 1

(20.x) The clinical supervision cycle; i.e. pre-conference, observation, analysis, and post-conference.

5 4 3 2 1

(21.x) The workshop as a whole.

5 4 3 2 1

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6. Indicate on the following five-point scale, how often you found it practical to apply the clinical supervision cycle with each level of practicum student.

	almost every lesson	once a day	once a week	once or twice a round	never
	5	4	3	2	1

(22.x) Ed. 2500 - Orientation to Teaching students (first practicum)

5 4 3 2 1

(23.x) Ed. 3500 - Professional Semester I students (second practicum)

5 4 3 2 1

(24.x) Ed. 3600 - Professional Semester II student teachers (third practicum)

5 4 3 2 1

7. (25.x) How did you feel about supervising practicum students before you took the workshop?

eager 5 4 neutral 3 2 reluctant 1

8. (26.x) How did you feel after you took the workshop?

eager 5 4 neutral 3 2 reluctant 1

9. (27.x) Before you took the workshop how would you have described your supervisory skills:

excellent 5 4 adequate 3 2 very poor 1

10. (28.x) After you took the workshop how would you describe your supervisory skills?

excellent 5 4 adequate 3 2 very poor 1

11. (29.x) Before you took the workshop how comfortable did you feel as a supervisor?

very comfortable 5 4 neutral 3 2 very uncomfortable 1

12. (30.x) After you took the workshop how comfortable did you feel as a supervisor?

very comfortable 5 4 neutral 3 2 very uncomfortable 1